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STATINTL

U.S. Embassy in Japan Tries to Soothe Press

From News Dispatches

TOKYO, April 30 (Friday) — "The charges made by the U.S. officials. The statement today aimed at editors of both Mainichi and Asahi urged an investigation of the charges.

The U.S. Embassy issued a statement today aimed at soothing Japanese reaction to allegations by State Department officials that two leading newspapers here are heavily infiltrated by Communists.

The allegations were made in Washington recently by U.S. Under Secretary of State George Ball and Douglas MacArthur II, Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations, in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. A censored transcript of their testimony was made public Wednesday.

In it, Committee Chairman J. William Fulbright asked why Japanese newspapers were so critical of U.S. policies. Ball replied that the Mainichi, the largest newspaper in Japan, "has on its staff quite a number of Communists . . . and has taken a critical attitude."

When Fulbright asked about another mass-circulation Japanese newspaper, the Asahi, McArthur said:

"They both are infiltrated. Asahi had over 200 members of the Communist Party on the editorial staff. . . ."

Both newspapers responded today by denouncing as "utterly groundless" the charges

Today's statement from the American Embassy said:

"We welcome the candid appraisal of our policies by the great independent media of other free nations. The Japanese press is no exception.

" . . . Even when it disagrees with or criticizes U.S. policy, we admire its professionalism and enterprise, welcome its independence and forthrightness and respect its political integrity."